

Public Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Chairman's Update

South Central Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The South Central Strategic Health Authority area covers the following counties, Buckinghamshire Oxfordshire, Hampshire, Berkshire and the Isle of Wight.

Health Overview and Scrutiny committees in this area total 13 and have come together to form a network that meets approximately once a quarter.

Their remit is to

- Share information about planned health scrutiny work and outcomes from local health scrutiny reviews.
- Review regional or specialist health services that impact on residents of member authorities
- Provide the opportunity for the Strategic Health Authority to communicate with the health OSCs on a regional level as a group.

The recent meeting held on 26th November covered the following issues:

1. The performance of the Strategic Health Authority against the key targets set by the Department of Health; for example management of hospital acquired infections, cancer services, A&E, smoking cessation Ambulance performance etc
2. The NHS next stage review 'Our NHS our future' lead by Lord Ara Darzi. The SHA have started to engage with the public and stakeholders on their views of the future for the NHS in the region. The role of OSC involvement in this process was discussed. The SHA are keen to see the PCTs involve OSCs in their programme of stakeholder involvement with a view to receiving comments by June 2008.
3. The Strategic Health Authority reported that each PCT had been tasked with producing a comprehensive plan, by the end of November, for the use of community hospitals in their area.
4. The Ambulance trust presented the group with their latest performance figures and plans for the future development of the service.

Buckinghamshire is performing comparatively well in the region with the highest Category A call to patient within 8 minutes, performance of all counties at just over 70%.

The Chief Executive believes that the current stock of vehicles in Buckinghamshire is slightly imbalanced and this will gradually move

towards higher numbers of RRVs (rapid response vehicles manned by a paramedic) as opposed to the current prevalence of 2 man ambulances.

5. Specialist Commissioning.

Some health services are of such a specialist nature with small numbers of patients requiring them, that they are commissioned on a regional basis rather than by an individual PCT and in some cases provided at regional or even national centres of excellence. There are approximately 35 of these services in all and some examples are

- Specialised cancer services
- Specialised burn care services
- Cystic fibrosis services
- Specialised renal services etc

It was agreed by the group that where there are proposed changes to the provision of these services the group would be well positioned to review the situation and report back to the OSCs on a county basis.

The next meeting will see a more detailed analysis of the current services and areas for potential reconfiguration.

6. Next meeting:

The next meeting will be held in Buckinghamshire and will focus on the following

- The role of the SHA and its interaction with scrutiny
- Specialist Commissioning
- Next steps in the Darzi review 'Our NHS our future'
- An overview from the Alzheimer's Society on the increasing incidence of dementia